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DOCTOR STRANGE
TM
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS
THE SORCERER SUPREME BATTLES ALONE AGAINST AN UNHOLY HOST IN...
THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP!
SLAM-BANG SUPERNATURAL ACTION AS YOU LIKE IT!
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Once he was a man like most *others*— a *worldly* man, seduced and jaded by *material* things. But then he discovered the *separate* reality, where *sorcery* and *men's souls* shaped the forces that shape our *lives*. In that instant, he was *born again*, to become a man like no other—a man who left us *behind*, as he strove to stand against the unseen subtle perils hovering *thick* and *black* around our fragile existence...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...
BACK FROM THEIR BATTLE WITH DRACULA,* DR. STRANGE AND WONG SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES FACING A MORE MUNDANE CHALLENGE...
THAT WOMAN! SHE'S TRAPPED ON THE FIRE ESCAPE-- CUT OFF BY THE FLAMES!
*LAST ISSUE. --MARV
AT LEAST, IT LOOKS MUNDANE...!
COME ON IN AND PLAY, WITH--

STEVE ENGLEHART, SAGA | GENE COLAN, PENCIL ART | TOM PALMER, INK & COLOR ART | JOHN COSTANZA, CALLIGRAPHY | MARV WOLFMAN, EDITOR

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THE CROWD CRANES FORWARD, EAGER FOR A SIGHT! AMONG THEM, MOVING MORE QUICKLY BUT TOUCHING NO ONE...
...STRIDES THE SOMBRE STRANGER.
WHA--? IS THAT DUDE WEARIN' A CAPE?
NAH-- MUSTA BEEN A TRICK O' THE LIGHT-- SOME SHADOW FROM THE FIRE!
OR MAYBE I BEEN PARTYIN' TOO MUCH!
THE SPELL IS SWIFTLY DONE. THE MASTER WALKS, AS EVER, UNSEEN.
BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH! I'VE ARRIVED NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!
SHE'S AT HER WITS' END!
SHE'S JUMPING!
IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL ANCIENT ONE-- IN THE NAME OF ADAM QADMON--
LET SHE WHO BEHOLDS DEATH'S SILVERY GRIN--

"NOT YET DEPART THE SUN!"
WHUMP
I'LL BE-- I DIDN'T SEE THAT AWNING THERE!
I MUST BE GOING BLIND!
PRAISE THE LORD! IT'S A MIRACLE!
I COULD HAVE SWORN THERE WAS NO AWNING ON THAT BUILDING!
THE MAGICIAN'S EYES NARROW, IN PAIN.
HE IS NOT GOD! NO, HE IS A MAN-- THE MAN WHO LOST THE WORLD!
OH, YES, WE WERE REBORN-- TO LIVE OR DIE AGAIN AS FATE MAY DECREE--
--BUT WE DON'T KNOW IT!
HE IS THE ONE MAN ALIVE WHO KNOWS THAT ALL OTHER MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN, PLANTS, AND ANIMALS--
--ALL OF US--
--DIED!
IF SOMEONE WERE TO TELL US, WE'D LAUGH.
OR SCREAM!
AND THE CHOICE BELONGS TO DR. STRANGE.
THE CROWD DISPERSES, MUTTERING AND HAPPY, UNAWARE OF WHO HAD PASSED THEM BY.
AT LEAST, MOST OF THEM ARE UNAWARE...!

MASTER, MAY I ASK WHAT IT IS THAT TROUBLES YOU? ARE WE NOT YET FREE OF THE CURSE OF DRACULA?
DRACULA...?
OH, YES, WONG--HE'LL BOTHER US NO MORE!
I'M SORRY. I WAS THINKING OF SOMETHING ELSE...
...SOMETHING I'D RATHER NOT DISCUSS.
AS YOU WISH--BUT PERHAPS A WARM MEAL WILL AID YOUR THOUGHTS.
MEAL? NO--YOU SHOULD REST, AFTER YOUR ORDEAL--!
YOURS WAS THE GREATER ORDEAL, MASTER. EXCUSE ME.
WONG WALKS AWAY, AND AFTER A MOMENT, DR. STRANGE TURNS HIS HIS FEET TOWARD HOME.
BUT WONG DOES NOT CONTINUE ALONE...
...INDEED, IT SEEMS THAT SEVERAL SETS OF EYES SEE HIS EVENTUAL ARRIVAL AT THE CORNER STORE.
VEGETABLES IN A CAN! I NEVER CEASE TO BE AMAZED AT THE WEST'S CONTRIVANCES!
THERE HE IS, SAM! JUST LIKE I TOLD YOU!
HEY! HEY, BOY!
HEY, WE WANT TO TALK WITH YOU, BOY!
YES?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WORKS FOR THAT WHITE DOCTOR, RIGHT? NOW WHAT KIND OF IMAGE IS THAT?
YEAH! WHERE'S YOUR PRIDE? I'D STARVE BEFORE I'D DO WHAT YOU DO!
PERHAPS SO... BUT YOU AND I ARE DIFFERENT MEN, WITH DIFFERENT LIVES.
IN THE LAND OF MY BIRTH, WISDOM WAS RESPECTED, AND TO BE OF SERVICE TO A MAN OF WISDOM WAS A HIGH ESTATE INDEED!
I HAVE LEFT MY LAND, BUT IT HAS NOT LEFT ME...

...AND IF THIS DISTURBS YOU...
...YOU WILL HAVE TO RESOLVE IT WITHIN YOURSELF.
EXCUSE ME.
OH! I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, SIR! I WAS NOT LOOKING--
THAT'S ALL RIGHT! NO HARM DONE!
...YET!
MEANWHILE, ONCE MORE WITHIN THE WALLS OF HIS SANCTUM SANCTORUM, THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS PACES SLOWLY TO AND FRO, TRYING TO FIND PEACE IN THE FAMILIAR VIBRATIONS OF HIS ANCIENT HOME...
...AND FAILING, AS HE REMEMBERS THAT THIS IS NOT HIS ANCIENT HOME!
EVERYTHING IS THE SAME, AND YET DIFFERENT! I CANNOT TELL IT IS DIFFERENT--IT LOOKS AND FEELS THE SAME--
--BUT I KNOW! I KNOW SO MUCH THAT OTHER MEN COULD NEVER EVEN SUSPECT--AND I WORRIED BEFORE--*
--THAT I HAD OPENED MYSELF TO TOO MUCH!
*IN DS #10. --M.
WHAT SORT OF VICTORY DID I WIN, WHEN ETERNITY RE-CREATED THE WORLD?
I KNEW REALITY WAS AN ILLUSION, BUT TO BE REMINDED EVERY MOMENT, BY EVERYTHING I SEE--!
THE MIND OF MAN NEEDS THE ILLUSION! I--
BY ALL THE GODS! CLEA!

SO, STEPHEN--YOU FLY AWAY TO CONFRONT ETERNITY, AND THEN SNEAK BACK WITHOUT A WORD!*
BUT I AM UN-CONCERNED, FOR I HAVE NOT STOOD IDLE IN THIS TIME!
*REMEMBER, THOSE FINAL MOMENTS FACING BARON MORDO (IN #12) WERE ERASED.--M.
WHEN NOT WORRYING MYSELF SICK FROM MY PRESENT-MENTS OF YOUR PERIL--
--I HAVE PURSUED MY PRACTICE IN MAGICKS!
SEE?
VERY... GOOD, CLEA. YOU'RE COMING ALONG QUITE WELL.
DORMAMMU'S DEMONS! WHAT A BUNDLE OF JOY YOU ARE!
OH, STEPHEN--
WHY DID YOU NOT TELL ME YOU'D RETURNED?
I'VE MISSED YOU SO!
HER LIPS ARE WARM, AND TENDER-- BUT HIS--!
WELL! WHAT DEEP THOUGHTS AM I INTERRUPTING NOW?
THE WORLD IS SAFE, IS IT NOT?
YES! THE WORLD IS FINE! ETERNITY IS GONE!
THIS IS A... PERSONAL MATTER!
A PERSONAL MATTER? ONE YOU CANNOT SHARE WITH ME?
STEPHEN, AT THE VERY LEAST, I AM YOUR DISCIPLE-- AND AT MOST, I AM YOUR WOMAN!
AM I NOT?
BUT WHAT CAN HE ANSWER TO THAT?

NOK NOK
NOK NOK
WONG IS NOT HERE, CLEA! I'LL ANSWER IT.
RELIEF IS IT, THAT HEARS THE LOUD RAP?
RELIEF THAT SOMEONE'S INTERVENED, AND PUSHED BACK THE INEVITABLE CONFRONTATION TO A LATER TIME, WHEN SOMEHOW, THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT TO DO MIGHT HAVE COME!
WE DON'T RECEIVE MANY VISITORS WHO KNOCK THESE DAYS.
I'D BEST BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.
DR. STRANGE?
I KNOW WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE, SIR! MAY I COME IN?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, MISTER-- AH--
MANDARIN, SIR. JAMES MANDARIN.
I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY.
I HAD HOPED YOU WOULD COOPERATE FROM THE START!
CLICK

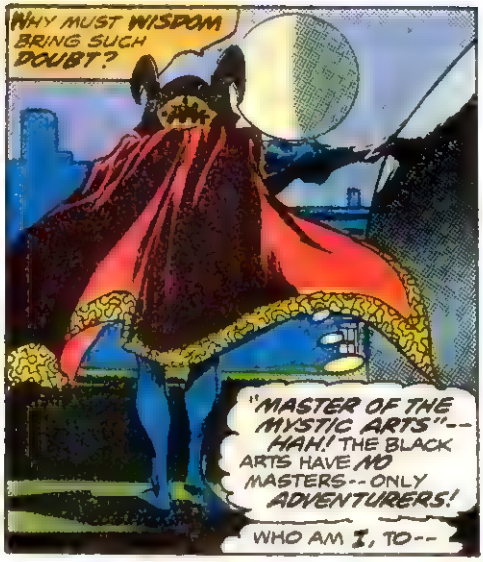
YAAAGHH
BY THE ROVING RINGS OF RAGGADORR!
HE EXCLAIMS.
ALL ANY OTHER PERSON WOULD HEAR IS "GOOD HEAVENS!"
CLEA! QUICKLY! RUN UPSTAIRS AND GET MY MEDICAL BAG!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE SLIT HIS OWN THROAT!
THE JUGULAR--EVEN THE STERNOMASTOIDS--! HE'D BE DEAD ALREADY IF I WEREN'T A PHYSICIAN!
HERE IS YOUR BAG, STEPHEN! WHAT CAN I DO?
SIDE BY SIDE, THEY STRUGGLE, AS ONCE MORE THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE AND DEATH ARE BROUGHT DOWN TO SPECIFICS! FIFTEEN MINUTES PASS, AND THEN--
MASTER! WHAT HAS OCCURED?
A MAN NEARLY DIED ON OUR DOORSTEP, WONG--BUT DIDN'T! GIVE ME A HAND, WILL YOU?
HE'LL NEED MORE CARE, BUT WE CAN'T GET INVOLVED WITH A HOSPITAL'S PAPERWORK!
WE'LL PUT HIM UPSTAIRS!
MASTER, DIDN'T WE SEE THIS MAN AT THE FIRE?
I WAS THINKING THE SAME THING, OLD FRIEND! BUT HE--
WHAT'S THE ROW, DOCTOR? RAMA KALIPH AND I WERE ROUSED FROM OUR BEDS!
LORD PHYFFE!

I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN THEY'RE STILL MY GUESTS HERE!
I HAVEN'T TIME TO TALK NOW! SEE ME LATER!
GOOD...
THERE'S STILL SOME BLEEDING, BUT I THINK HE'LL BE--
--ALL RIGHT--?
HOW CAN HE BE CONSCIOUS?
HELLO..., DOCTOR...!
DON'T TRY TO TALK, MANDARIN.
YOU...REALLY ARE...A GREAT DOCTOR! I WAS RIGHT...TO COME TO YOU!
VAPORS OF VALTORR-- SWIRL 'ROUND THY BROW-- MAY THE MOON'S MISTS OF MORPHEUS--
--ENVELOP THEE NOW!
HE'LL SLEEP TILL DAWN, WONG! CHECK ON HIM THROUGH-OUT THE NIGHT!
IT SHALL BE DONE.

THIS IS THE LAST STRAW! THERE SEEMS NO SURE RESPITE FROM THE WORLD! WHAT DID WORDSWORTH SAY--?
"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON, GETTING AND SPENDING, WE LAY WASTE OUR POWERS: LITTLE WE SEE IN NATURE THAT IS OURS."
LITTLE I SEE ANYWHERE THAT I CAN RELATE TO! I'M LOSING MY CONTROL--MY BALANCE--
--AND WITHOUT BALANCE, A SORCERER IS NO MORE THAN A MADMAN!
THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER:--
--MAGIC!
I'VE BEEN OVERWHELMED WITH THE UNREAL, BUT ALL I CAN DO IS PROBE FARTHER!
AS WITH A BICYCLIST, MOTION IS ALL THAT SUSTAINS ME!
I NEED COUNSEL--
--FROM THE ANCIENT ONE!
I'VE NEVER TRIED TO CONTACT HIM ON HIS PLANE--IN FACT, HE TOLD ME IT COULDN'T BE DONE--
--BUT I'M AS MUCH IN THE DARK NOW AS I EVER WAS AS HIS DISCIPLE!
MUST CONCENTRATE--PUT ASIDE ALL FALSE FANCIES AND FEARS!
I MUST BREAK THROUGH!

AAAAAAA
BY CYTTORAK'S CRIMSON BANDS! I'M UNDER ATTACK!
CAN I, IN MY UNCERTAINTY, HAVE CALLED THEM TO ME?
BACK, SPAWN OF EVIL! BACK TO YOUR LEPROUS HALLS!
THESE ARE DEMONS OF THE NETHER-PLANES-- SUCH AS UNWARY NOVICES BLUNDER ACROSS!

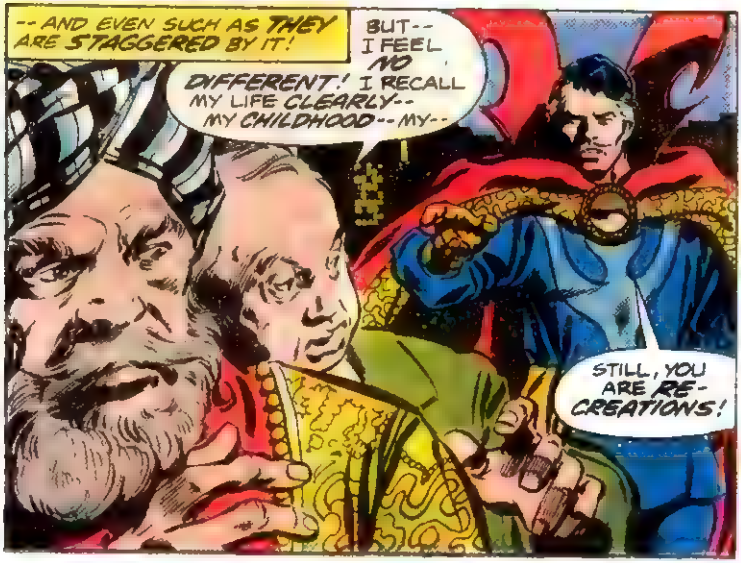
AND SO, THEY VANISH! THEY WERE EASILY VANQUISHED!
BUT NOW THE SPELL IS SHATTERED-- THE MOMENT PAST!
THEN LET THE DARK ONCE MORE DESCEND--
--FOR THE SORCERER SUPREME HAS REACHED HIS END!
HE IS LIKE A CAGED TIGER, WONG! I DO NOT--CANNOT-- UNDERSTAND!
WHY WILL HE NOT SPEAK?
FOR MANY YEARS NOW, HE HAS BORNE THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD UPON HIS SHOULDERS, MISS--AND BY TEMPERAMENT AND AVOCATION, HE IS A SOLITARY MAN!
WHAT CAN ANY OF US TRULY KNOW OF DR. STRANGE?
BUT WHAT SECRET COULD BE SO TERRIBLE THAT HE COULDN'T ENTRUST IT TO ME?
SURELY, THERE IS NOTHING THAT I COULD NOT NOW COMPREHEND!
ONCE MORE AM I DRIVEN TO WONDER...IF HE NO LONGER CARES FOR ME!
AHH, THE CONFIDENCE OF IGNORANCE...!


WHY MUST WISDOM BRING SUCH DOUBT?
"MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS"--HAH! THE BLACK ARTS HAVE NO MASTERS--ONLY ADVENTURERS!
WHO AM I, TO--

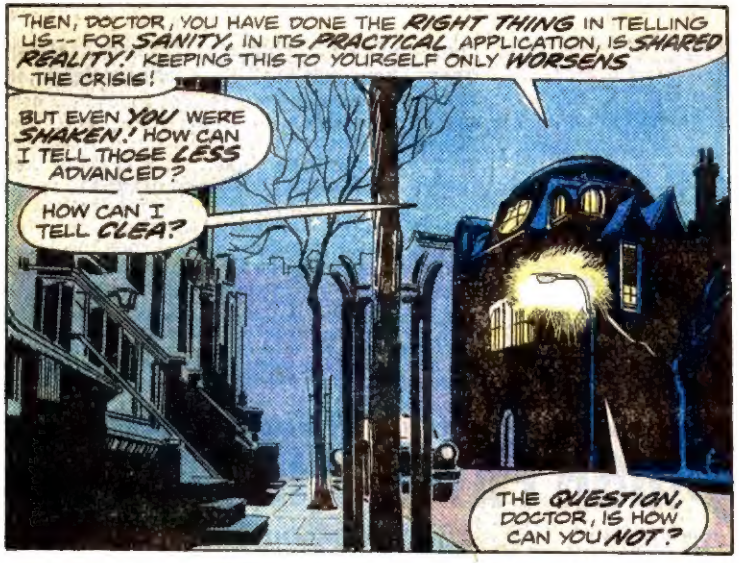
DR. STRANGE--?
DOCTOR, PARDON OUR INTRUSION... BUT BOTH RAMA KALIPH AND I ARE ADEPTS--
--AND THOUGH NOT IN YOUR LEAGUE, WE CANNOT HELP BUT SENSE YOUR DISTRESS.
YES?

YOU HAVE BEEN MOST GRACIOUS DURING OUR SOJOURN IN AMERICA. MAY WE NOT AID YOU NOW, IN SOME WAY?
NO...I'M SORRY, LORD PHYFFE, BUT...

AND THEN, THE DAM BREAKS!
ALL RIGHT. PERHAPS YOU TWO SHOULD KNOW!
HE TELLS THEM--TELLS THEM EVERYTHING--

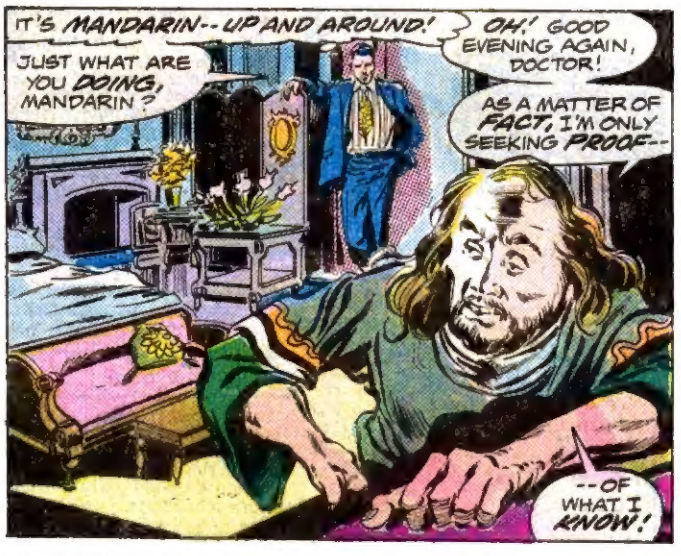

--AND EVEN SUCH AS THEY ARE STAGGERED BY IT!
BUT--I FEEL NO DIFFERENT! I RECALL MY LIFE CLEARLY--MY CHILDHOOD--MY--
STILL, YOU ARE RE-CREATIONS!

WHAT IS MEMORY ANYWAY? YESTERDAY'S REALITY IS NO MORE TANGIBLE--
--THAN LAST NIGHT'S DREAM!
GENTLEMEN, I FEAR FOR MY SANITY!

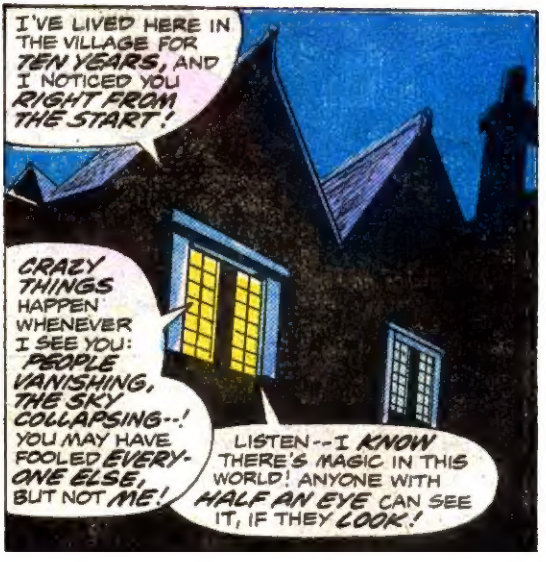

THEN, DOCTOR, YOU HAVE DONE THE RIGHT THING IN TELLING US-- FOR SANITY, IN ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION, IS SHARED REALITY! KEEPING THIS TO YOURSELF ONLY WORSENS THE CRISIS!
BUT EVEN YOU WERE SHAKEN! HOW CAN I TELL THOSE LESS ADVANCED?
HOW CAN I TELL CLEA?
THE QUESTION, DOCTOR, IS HOW CAN YOU NOT?

THE MAN OF MYSTERY STARES AT THEM FOR FIFTEEN SECONDS, JAW TIGHT AND EYES BLEAK. THEN--
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT ANY MORE-- BUT I'LL DO AS YOU SAY!

ONE THING IS CERTAIN: CLEA AND I CANNOT BE TOGETHER WHILE THIS STANDS BETWEEN US!
BUT THOUGH SHE WAS BORN TO MAGIC, SHE STILL HAS HAD LITTLE FORMAL TRAINING! THE CONCEPT COULD STILL BE TOO MUCH--
THUMP!
EH? THAT CAME FROM MY BEDROOM!


IT'S MANDARIN-- UP AND AROUND!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MANDARIN?
OH! GOOD EVENING AGAIN, DOCTOR!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I'M ONLY SEEKING PROOF--
--OF WHAT I KNOW!

AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE A SORCERER, EVEN IF EVERYTHING I SEE AROUND US LOOKS NORMAL! I KNOW THAT!
I SHALL NOT BE FOOLED!


I'VE LIVED HERE IN THE VILLAGE FOR TEN YEARS, AND I NOTICED YOU RIGHT FROM THE START!
CRAZY THINGS HAPPEN WHENEVER I SEE YOU: PEOPLE VANISHING, THE SKY COLLAPSING--! YOU MAY HAVE FOOLED EVERY-ONE ELSE, BUT NOT ME!
LISTEN--I KNOW THERE'S MAGIC IN THIS WORLD! ANYONE WITH HALF AN EYE CAN SEE IT, IF THEY LOOK!

THAT'S WHY I DID WHAT I DID: TO FORCE YOU TO TAKE ME IN--
--AND I WAS RIGHT, BECAUSE NO NORMAL DOCTOR COULD HAVE PULLED ME TOGETHER SO FAST!
DON'T YOU SEE? I'LL GO TO ANY LENGTHS -- TO STUDY AT YOUR FEET!
IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT? YOU THINK I'M SOME SORT OF GURU?
MANDARIN, EVEN AS A FANTASY, THAT'S LUDICROUS--
--AND AS A BASIS FOR NEAR-SUICIDE, IT'S MONSTROUS!
BELIEVE ME, MISTER-- THE LAST THING IN THE WORLD THAT I AM IS A MESSIAH!
THE VERY LAST THING!
WITH THAT, HE MARCHES JAMES MANDARIN BACK TO HIS ROOM, AND LOCKS HIM IN!
BUT THIS SEEMINGLY PERIPHERAL PROBLEM--
A GURU!
--IS FAR FROM SOLVED--AND IS ABOUT TO BECOME THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THIS LONG AND LONELY NIGHT!
HE CAN'T REJECT ME NOW--NOT WHEN I'VE GONE SO FAR!
I NEED SOMEBODY TO TEACH ME-- TO GIVE MY LIFE PURPOSE!
THERE'S NO POINT TO LIFE IF I JUST GO BACK OUT ON THE STREET!
NO! BETTER I DIE FIRST!
CRASH!
BETTER I RIP MYSELF WIDE OPEN!

DIE! DIE!
NO, JAMES MANDARIN! YOU SHALL NOT DIE-- YET!
HUH? WHO SAID THAT?
YOU DO HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE! YOU ARE MY CHOSEN INSTRUMENT, THROUGH WHICH I'LL COMPLETE MY PLAN!
HERE! I'LL BE YOUR MESSIAH!
AND THOUGH NOTHING APPEARS TO MOVE IN THE SHADOW-LIMNED CHAMBER... JAMES MANDARIN...
...CHANGES!
WHILE BELOW--
--SO THAT IS WHAT HAS HAPPENED, CLEA.
MAY THE GODS GRANT HER UNDERSTANDING!
I-- DIED?
BLOWN TO BITS-- AND REPLACED?
THIS IS A GAME YOU'RE PLAYING, ISN'T IT? SOME TEST?
STEPHEN, I COULDN'T HAVE--
STEPHEN--?
OH, NO! IN UMAR'S NAME, NO!!
I DIDN'T DIE! I'M THE SAME AS I ALWAYS WAS!
SHE CAN'T COPE WITH THIS! IT STRIKES TOO CLOSE TO THE CORE OF HER BEING!
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TOLD HER! MY WORST FEARS ARE COMING TRUE!

YES, STRANGE-- YOUR WORST FEARS!
YOUR LIFE, YOUR WOMAN'S, AND MANDARIN'S HAVE BECOME A HELL ON EARTH--
SMASH
--AND THOSE ARE EXACTLY THE SORTS OF LIVES--
-- SATAN LOVES!
WONG HEARS THE RASPING VOICE, AND RUSHES TO HIS MASTER'S AID-- BUT WHEN HE BURSTS IN, HE FINDS ONLY A SMOLDERING RUG--
--AND THE SICKENING STENCH OF SULFUR--ALMOST GONE!
NEXT
WHERE THERE'S SMOKE... THERE'S HELL-FIRE... AND SALVATION!